

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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P R 251250Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9451

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY KTTHMANDU

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IN, PFOR

SUBJ: REACTION TO JUNE 24 SUPREME COURT RULING

REF: NEW DELHI 8327

SUMMARY: BOTH THE CONGRESS AND THE NON-CPI OPPOSITION ARE EMPHASIZING THOSE SECTIONS OF JUDGE IYER'S JUNE 24 "MIXED" RULING THAT SUPPORT THEIR SEPARATE OBJECTIVES: THE CONGRESS THAT MRS. GANDHI'S CONTINUATION AS THE PRIME MINISTER WILL NOT BE AFFECTED PENDING THE SUPREME COURT RULING; THE OPPOSITION THAT THE RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON MRS. GANDHI AS A MEMBER OF THE LOK SABHA REQUIRE THAT SHE STEP DOWN. THE NON-CPI OPPOSITION WILL BEGIN A "NATIONWIDE STRUGGLE" TO PROTEST THE FAILURE OF MRS. GANDHI TO RESIGN. ALMOST ALL OF THE WIDELY READ ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS AND MANY VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE PRIME

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MINISTER RESIGN. END SUMMARY.

1. MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY PARTY (CPP) PRESENT IN NEW DELHI AND THE CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY BOARD (CPB) MET SEPARATELY ON THE EVENING OF JUNE 24 TO REAFFIRM THEIR FAITH IN MRS. GANDHI'S LEADERSHIP AND TO URGE HER TO STAY ON AS PRIME MINISTER. THE CPB MEETING TOOK PLACE AT MRS. GANDHI'S DELHI HOME, THOUGH THE PRESS WAS INFORMED AFTERWARDS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOT ATTEND. SHORTLY AFTER THE RULING, THE PRESS REPORTED MRS. GANDHI TELLING A GROUP OF WELL-WISHERS OUTSIDE HER HOME THAT THE IMPORTANT QUESTION WAS NOT OF HER STAYING BUT WHICH PATH THE COUNTRY FOLLOWED. SHE HERSELF DECLINED COMMENT ON THE SUPREME COURT JUSTICE'S STAY ORDER.

2. THE CPP AND CPB RESOLUTIONS, ENDORSED BY JAGJIVAN RAM AND CHAVAN, EMPHASIZED JUSTICE IYER'S CONCLUSIONS THAT MRS. GANDHI'S STATUS AS PRIME MINISTER, HER EXERCISE OF THE FUNCTIONS OF PRIME MINISTER AND HER LOK SABHA MEMBERSHIP WILL REMAIN UNAFFECTED BY THE RULING, AND THAT NEITHER "THE FINDING OF CGRRUPT PRACTICE" NOR ITS "SEQUEL OF DISQUALIFICATION" WILL BE OPERATIVE PENDING A SUPREME COURT DECISION.

3. THE NON-CPI OPPOSITION PARTIES, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE EMPHASIZING THE RESTRICTIONS ON MRS. GANDHI'S PARTICIPATION IN LOK SABHA PROCEEDINGS AS A LOK SABHA MEMBER AND LOUDLY REITERATING THEIR DEMAND THAT "POLITICAL PROPIETY" AND DEMOCRATIC CONVENTIONS" DEMAND THAT SHE STEP DOWN. FOLLOWING TWO DAYS OF TALKS AMONG THE FOUR PARTIES WITHIN THE "PEOPLE'S FRONT," THE AKALI DAL, AND J.P. NARAYAN, CONGRESS (O) PRESIDENT ASHOK MEHTA ANNOUNCED ON JUNE 25 THAT THE OPPOSITION WOULD LAUNCH A "NATION-WIDE STRUGGLE" FROM JUNE 29 TO PRESS FOR MRS. GANDHI TO RESIGN. A "PEOPLE'S ACTION COMMITTEE" UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF MORAJI DESAI WILL COORDINATE THE MOVEMENT. DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF THE AGITATION, THE OPPOSITION WILL HOLD DAILY DEMONSTRATIONS IN FRONT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S DELHI HOME, AND RALLIES AT THE DISTRICT AND STATE LEVEL AROUND THE COUNTRY.

4. THE ALMOST UNANIMOUS REACTION FROM THE WIDELY-READ, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NON-COMMITTED (I.E., NON-PARTY AFFILIATED ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS IN DELHI, BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA HAS BEEN IN FAVOR OF THE PRIME MINISTER RESIGNING. THE ONLY NOTABLE EXCEPTION IS THE MADRAS HINDU. THERE IS A WIDER DIS-PERSION OF OPINION AMONG VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS AROUND THE COUNTRY, BUT MANY HAVE ALSO SUGGESTED MRS. GANDHI STEP DOWN.

5. COPIES OF JUSTICE IYER'S "SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY"

RULING BEING POUCHED TO NEA/INS AND INR/SOA.

SCHNEIDER

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